

# Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

## Best-laid plans

*Even the best-laid plans can go awry. Are you prepared with a contingency plan?*

### Beyond reason

People laugh at me when I pack to go somewhere. I'll take half my office with me to be sure I have the right file if and when I need it. I'll make three copies and give one to someone here at the office to safeguard, take one with me and put one in the suitcase. That way, if my luggage doesn't arrive, I'll have a backup; or, if I get hit by the proverbial bus, someone else will have a copy to pick up where I left off.

To some, it would seem a waste of time. But, it actually helps me because in feeling prepared for anything, I don't waste as much time and stomach acids worrying. And then, every so often, the contingency plan becomes necessary. I have a backup when a file corrupts. I have a file on disc to work on when the server goes down. Or when the cord I thought would work doesn't, I have other options.

Those options came in handy at the Range Beef Cow Symposium in mid-December. Angus Productions Inc. (API) provided real-time coverage at [www.rangebeefcow.com](http://www.rangebeefcow.com). This event is packed full of half-hour presentations on production, management, marketing and industry issues.

To cover it all and enable ourselves to post the summaries as quickly as possible, we worked with the University of Nebraska's

electronic media team to provide a live video stream to several field editors and our in-house staff, who were in the final week of production on the January *Angus Journal* and January *Angus Beef Bulletin*. We provided that live stream on the web site for producers to access as well.

Things worked extremely well in Colorado, but the December ice storm that put Saint Joseph, Mo., on the national news wreaked havoc on our best-laid plans. The American Angus Association and API offices in Saint Joseph were shut down for a day with no electricity. So, even though we could record in Fort Collins, we couldn't provide streaming video for our field team or visitors to the site for the first day of the conference.

The backup plan of recording on a digital recorder and having audio to e-mail to field editors shortly after the presentations sure came in handy and alleviated some of the stress we might have felt otherwise. We might have been a little slower posting our coverage than we would have been otherwise, but the end result was coverage as good or better than we anticipated.

The second day everything worked as planned. And the University of Nebraska's electronic media team is making a DVD of each presentation granting them permission

to do so. The DVD will provide both the PowerPoint and the audio. (They are available for \$10 for the first DVD and \$5 for each additional DVD from the University of Nebraska, CIT-Electronic Media, PO Box 830918, Lincoln, NE 68583-0918).

### What contingencies do you have?

What contingency plans do you have in place?

What if corn prices increase another \$1 per bushel?

What if your cleanup bull doesn't settle any cows?

What if you are subject to a drought this summer?

What if a storm prevents your ultrasound technician from scanning on the designated day prior to your sale?

What if someone knocks on your door wanting 50 bred heifers?

What if we found a foreign animal disease in the United States that caused a stop movement, in which no animals are allowed to be transported for any reason? Could you stock and feed your cows and their progeny for three years without any income from livestock sales?

Have you thought through what would happen to your operation if you were injured and couldn't work for a month — or for six months?

Do you have your estate in order if that proverbial bus hits you?

A little thought now could alleviate a lot of worry for you and others down the road. And planning in a less-emotional situation generally translates to a better, more well-thought-out plan.



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